

Shrewsbury Commission on Disabilities
Minutes, July 10, 2007

Chairperson Keith Willette called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM at Town Hall. In attendance with Mr. Willette were Town Manager Daniel Morgado, commission members Jerry Berrier, Loretta Henry, and Barbara Smith. Invited speaker Tony Perry and a resident named Lynn sat in.

Keith introduced Mr. Perry who described the following situation and asked that we consider writing a letter of support of a variance request:

The Youth Football League is running an upgrade project in the area of the football field at the Oak Middle School.

The specific item in the upgrade for which a variance is being sought is a free-standing 8 by 18-foot press box which is to be built approximately 12 feet above ground. After much negotiating, the project was approved by the neighborhood committee; initially it was to be attached to permanently mounted bleachers, but the neighborhood committee voted against that type of permanent setup.

Next the project was brought to Shrewsbury Inspector of Buildings Ron Alarie, and he questioned whether the press box is accessible.

Mr. Perry contacted the Architectural Access Board and learned that current code requires that such structures meet accessibility guidelines; he said he and the builder were previously unaware of this requirement.

The minimum cost to make the structure accessible would be \$40,000.00, and Mr. Perry said his association is a small 501C3 nonprofit "all volunteer" organization. He said they are currently at the end of their finances which were acquired over a long period of time through fund raising projects.

Only 3 people at a time would be in the press box.

There is no plan to use it for town functions; it is strictly to be used as a press box.

After a lengthy discussion, Mr. Berrier made and Mr. Willette seconded a motion to approve a letter in support of the variance. The commission members approved the motion unanimously with the following stipulations:

The Architectural Access Board must approve the variance

Should the athletic association become aware that a person with a mobility disability wishes to access the press box for its intended purpose, then the association must be proactive in offering an accommodation. Examples of an accommodation might include a remote video camera, or a portable shelter at ground level.

the minutes of our May meeting were approved without change.

Annual Disability Forum:

We all agreed that the theme for this year's forum, to be held some time in October, will be "Emergency Preparedness".

Mr. Morgado said town officials will talk at the forum about plans for "sheltering in place".

He also asked that we include a time for town residents with disabilities to offer their questions and input.

We agreed that we must set down our agenda during our August meeting.

Mr. Morgado said Keith Willette and Barbara Smith have been re-appointed to the disability commission.

He expects to be able to inform us at our next meeting who will replace Moira Miller.

Mr. Willette reported that renovations have been completed at the Maple Avenue post office.

Mrs. Henry reported that there have been no phone calls to our line since our last meeting.

Our next meeting is scheduled for August 14 at 7:00 P.M. at Town Hall.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:05 P.M.

Respectfully,

Jerry Berrier, Secretary